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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/645,069	08/21/2003	Jay N. Bruggeman	03-1481	6969
8840	7590	04/06/2006	EXAMINER	
ECKERT SEAMANS CHERIN & MELLOTT, LLC ALCOA TECHNICAL CENTER 100 TECHNICAL DRIVE ALCOA CENTER, PA 15069-0001			BELL, BRUCE F	
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
				1746

DATE MAILED: 04/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<i>Office Action Summary</i>	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/645,069	BRUGGEMAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Bruce F. Bell	Art Unit 1746	
<i>-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --</i> Period for Reply			
A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). <p>Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).</p>			
Status			
1) <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____. 2a) <input type="checkbox"/> This action is FINAL . 2b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This action is non-final. 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under <i>Ex parte Quayle</i> , 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.			
Disposition of Claims			
4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) <u>1-13</u> is/are pending in the application. 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration. 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed. 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) <u>1-13</u> is/are rejected. 7) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to. 8) <input type="checkbox"/> Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.			
Application Papers			
9) <input type="checkbox"/> The specification is objected to by the Examiner. 10) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The drawing(s) filed on <u>21 August 2003</u> is/are: a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accepted or b) <input type="checkbox"/> objected to by the Examiner. Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d). 11) <input type="checkbox"/> The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.			
Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119			
12) <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f). a) <input type="checkbox"/> All b) <input type="checkbox"/> Some * c) <input type="checkbox"/> None of: 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copies of the priority documents have been received. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____. 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)). * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.			
Attachment(s)			
1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>12/16/03; 1/05/05</u> .		4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____. 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.	

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-13 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Desclaux et al (4668350) in combination with Cotten (6440294) and Barron, JR. et al (20020146057).

Desclaux et al disclose a method for controlling the rate of aluminum fluoride addition to a cryolite-based electrolyte of an aluminum electrolytic reduction cell makes use of the known ration between cell temperature and bath ($\text{NaF}:\text{AlF}_3$) ratio. A target temperature is established corresponding to a target bath ratio. The cell temperature is measured at intervals and the rate of AlF_3 addition altered depending on whether the measured temperature is above or below the target temperature. The method is faster than tradition methods involving analysis of electrolyte samples and is amendable to computer control. See abstract. The invention makes use of the known dependence of electrolyte temperature on bath ratio to control the rate of addition of AlF_3 to a cryolite electrolyte. The method of controlling the addition of AlF_3 to a cryolite-based electrolyte of an aluminum reduction cell comprises establishing a target cell temperature, establishing a standard rate of addition of AlF_3 , measuring the actual cell temperature, and in response to the actual temperature measurement, altering the rate of addition of

AlF_3 , by increasing the rate if the temperature is greater than the target cell temperature and decreasing the rate if the temperature is less than the target cell temperature and repeating the steps of measuring the actual cell temperature and altering the rate of addition based on the actual versus target temperatures of the cell. See col. 1, lines 50-64.

Desclaux et al does not disclose crust hole repair or sensing the temperature using infrared.

Cotten discloses crust hole repair for electrolytic cells, wherein the repair is performed by covering the hole with a receptacle containing solid particles. See abstract and col. 2, lines 15-23.

Barron, JR. et al disclose a temperature sensing device and system including a processor, a memory and optics for collecting incident infrared energy to produce a temperature signal. The device and system function to derive one or more signal parameters from the infrared energy and compare these parameters with acceptable, pre-defined limits. A filtered or unfiltered temperature indication is provided if the parameters lie within a pre-defined limits and a different temperature indication is displayed if one or more parameters exceeds the pre-defined limits. See abstract. The patent further discloses an internal infrared temperature sensor that may be used for target materials such as glass, aluminum, or silicon and /or a selected product such as a block, a rod or a wafer. The infrared temperature sensor collects the incident infrared energy that originates at the target material and the temperature measurement is obtained from the data obtained at one or more wavelengths. See para [0014-0015].

A computer is disclosed to be attached to thermometric sensor using a cable and that the computer includes a processor and memory for performing the method of acquiring the incident infrared energy via the sensor, so that the raw infrared data, temperature data, signal strength data and /or signal dilution data to the computer via cable is accomplished. See para [0021].

The subject matter as a whole would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the instant invention was made because even though the prior art of Desclaux et al does not disclose crust repair or the use of a sensing infrared radiation using an infrared sensor, the prior art of Cotten shows that it is conventional in the art to repair the crust by using solid particles and that the use of an infrared sensor for use with target materials such as aluminum to detect the temperature of the aluminum material remote from the material is known to the person having ordinary skill in the art. The prior art method of controlling operation of a cell for producing aluminum by establishing a standard rate of AlF₃ addition and using the actual temperature of the aluminum to determine the addition amount is known, and since one having ordinary skill in the art knows that accurate temperature reading and control of loss of temperature in an aluminum production cell is necessary, one having ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to use the method of crust repair as set forth in Cotten and use the infrared sensor as set forth in Barron, JR et al to enable a system and method that would yield more control of operations in production of aluminum.

Therefore, the prior art of Desclaux et al in combination with Cotten and Barron, JR et al render the applicants instant invention obvious for the reasons set forth above with respect to the instant claims.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bruce F. Bell whose telephone number is 571-272-1296. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 6:30 AM - 3:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Barr can be reached on 571 272-1414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

BFB
April 3, 2006

Bruce Bell
Bruce F. Bell
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1746